

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Freedom of speech is one of the greatest rights United States Citizens have. We have the right to voice our opinion about anything regardless of whether it is government or a private concern. To have the courage of one's conviction, to stand up publicly for what one believes in, in spite of what may be an unpopular issue, is both admirable and what makes America the strong nation that it is.

To use this right to unfairly influence a democratic election of the commander in chief of the largest nation in the free world, is absolutely immoral, divisive, and truly un-American.

Sinclair's unfair use of money and power to brazenly create an uneven playing field and trampled on the average citizen's ability is intolerable. It in fact, attempts to disenfranchise the billions of voters who believe passionately in their candidate but lack the means to disseminate their message and dispel blatant lies that are disseminated in glossy professionally media ads. Their intent is - to sway the public who may, not have the knowledge, ability, or time to undertake a massive witch-hunt... it is not to inform.

Sinclair's attempt to force all their media affiliates including, ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX and others, to play the anti-Kerry documentary two weeks before an election and to block all attempts to run any anti-Bush documentaries is a catastrophic error that undermines the very democratic principles on which our country was built.

Such strong-arm tactics speak to a dictatorship... not a democracy.